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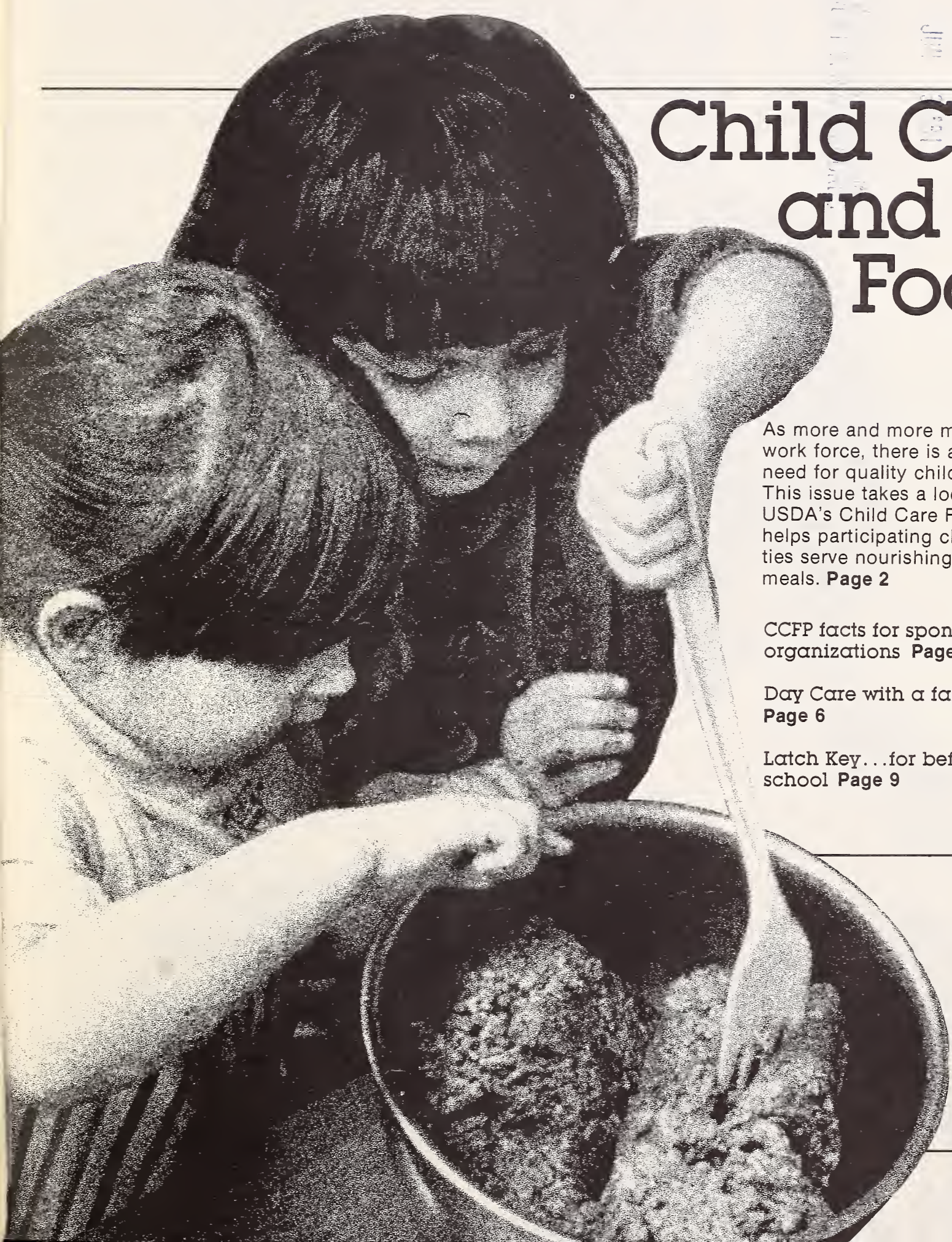
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April 1981 Volume 11 Number 2

Child Care and Food



As more and more mothers join the work force, there is an increasing need for quality child care services. This issue takes a look at how USDA's Child Care Food Program helps participating child care facilities serve nourishing, well-balanced meals. **Page 2**

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CHILD CARE AND FOOD

The Child Care Food Program can make it easier for child care centers and day care homes to serve nourishing well-balanced meals to children. The program provides cash reimbursements for part, or in some cases all, of meal costs. It also provides USDA-donated foods, technical assistance, and guidance.

Child care centers, family and group day care homes, and outside-school-hours care

centers can receive this aid. Child care centers and outside-school-hours care centers may participate as independent institutions or under the guidance of sponsoring organizations. Family and group day care homes must have a sponsoring organization to join.

The next 10 pages are full of information on the Child Care Food

Program. You'll find the basics, like who can participate, some specific information for sponsoring organizations, and two features—one on a family day care home sponsored by a child care association, another on an outside-school-hours care center operated by the YMCA in cooperation with schools.

Who can participate?

Program benefits are available to children 18 years old and younger and to certain people who, according to the state's definition, are physically or mentally handicapped.

In order to participate, handicapped people must be enrolled in a nonresidential institution where most participants are age 18 or younger.

Eligibility requirements vary for different kinds of institutions. To find out eligibility requirements for each kind of institution, use the following definitions. Then refer to that category in the chart. An important requirement for child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, and sponsoring organizations



Eligibility Requirements

| | Child Care Centers | Outside-School-Hours Centers | Family and Group Day Care Homes | Sponsoring Organizations |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Must provide nonresidential child care services. | X | X | X | |
| Must be a governmental agency, or have Federal tax-exempt status, or have applied for it, or participate in another Federal program requiring it. | X | X | | X |
| Must have child care licensing or approval or be receiving Title XX child care funds or meet alternative licensing standards. | X | X | X | |
| May participate in the program with or without a sponsoring organization. | X | X | | |
| May only participate under a sponsoring organization. | | | X | |

is that they be nonprofit.

Child care centers are licensed or approved to provide nonresidential child care services to enrolled children, primarily preschoolers, outside of the home setting.

Family and group day care homes are licensed or approved to offer organized, nonresidential child care programs in private homes, primarily to preschoolers. Generally:

A **family day care home** consists of a single staff member licensed to care for up to six children, including no more than two of his or her own.

A **group day care home** may have no more than 12 children enrolled under the care of two or more staff members.

Outside-school-hours care centers are licensed or approved to provide organized nonresidential child care services before or after school hours to enrolled children, primarily of school age.

Sponsoring organizations can administer the Child Care Food Program in child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, and day care homes. The sponsored facilities provide the care. The sponsoring organization provides supervisory and technical aid and accepts final responsibility for the finances and administration of the program. Organizations such as units of state or local governments, community agencies, and churches frequently become sponsoring organizations.

Licensing and tax-exempt status

Institutions that are not part of a state or local government agency and are not family or group day care homes must have tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or must have applied to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for it at the time they apply for the Child Care Food Program. If an institution takes part in other Federal programs for which it needs nonprofit status, it already meets this requirement. Local IRS offices give information on how to get tax-exempt status.

All institutions, except sponsoring institutions, must have child care licensing or approval from the licensing agency for that state. Institutions that receive Title XX funds for child care already meet this requirement. The administering agency can help the institution find out how to get a license.

For more information

Child care institutions and sponsoring organizations can get information on the Child Care Food Program from the agency that administers the program in their state. In most states, the state department of education is the administering agency. Where states do not administer the program, regional offices of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service are the administering agencies.

To find out who administers the Child Care Food Program in your state, contact the nearest FNS regional office:

New England Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
33 North Avenue
Burlington, Mass. 01803
Telephone: (617) 272-0861

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
One Vahlsing Center
Robbinsville, N.J. 08691
Telephone: (609) 259-3041

Southeast Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1100 Spring Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Ga. 30367
Telephone: (404) 881-4911

Midwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
536 South Clark Street
Chicago, Ill. 60605
Telephone: (312) 353-6673

Mountain Plains Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2420 West 26th Avenue
Room 430-D
Denver, Colo. 80211
Telephone: (303) 837-5071

Southwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1100 Commerce Street
Dallas, Tex. 75242
Telephone: (214) 767-0214

Western Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
550 Kearny Street
San Francisco, Cal. 94108
Telephone: (415) 556-4256

by Linda Feldman

Child Care Food Program **FACTS** for sponsoring organizations

A key link in the chain between Federal assistance and many local child care operators is the sponsoring organization. Sponsoring organizations get Federal funding and technical assistance that can have a lasting effect on the quality of child care in local communities. Qualified organizations can sponsor the Child Care Food Program in family and group day care homes, child care centers, and outside-school-hours care centers. In many instances, the same organization serves as sponsor for both centers and homes. Here are some CCFP facts for sponsoring organizations:

Sponsoring organizations can get various kinds of assistance to help them organize and operate the CCFP. Whenever sponsoring organizations have a problem, they can contact the administering agency for help. The administering agency, usually the state department of education, can provide guidance on application procedures, meal pattern requirements, food service operations, record-keeping, reimbursement or any other aspect of program management. Administering agencies provide technical assistance through

workshops, visits to individual child care institutions, newsletters and other publications, and phone calls.

Sponsoring organizations provide similar program assistance to each child care facility they sponsor. They make pre-approval visits to homes and centers that wish to participate under their sponsorship. They train day care providers and child care center staffs on program requirements. And they periodically review and monitor food service operations in all their centers and homes.

An important responsibility of sponsoring organizations is to see that meals served by their centers and homes meet USDA meal pattern requirements. These requirements help to ensure that all meals will be well-balanced. They are based on research related to the individual needs of infants and children over 1 year old. Centers and homes can prepare meals themselves or get them from a food service facility in a local school or through a food vendor.

Sponsoring organizations receive USDA meal reimbursements from the state office administering the program. They, in turn, pass the funds along to the centers or day care homes. There are two methods by which sponsoring organizations may be reimbursed. One method is for organizations that sponsor outside-school-hours care centers and child care centers. The other is for

organizations that sponsor day care homes.

In general, payments for a sponsoring organization's program at both child care and outside-school-hours care centers are limited to the number of meals served to enrolled children multiplied by the appropriate rate of reimbursement. These rates of reimbursement are determined by the economic need of the children served by the sponsoring organization's centers. Using USDA guidelines, each center determines the child's economic need based on a statement of family size and income. This statement is prepared by the center and completed by the parents.

Depending on a child's economic need, the child is placed in one of three categories for meals served at the center: paid, reduced-price, or free. USDA provides additional reimbursement for needy children whose economic status places them in the free or reduced-price categories.

The appropriate rate of reimbursement, multiplied by the number of meals served to enrolled children, represents the maximum amount of money a center can receive for breakfasts, lunches, suppers, or snacks served. Sponsoring organizations usually fund the total administrative and operating costs at their centers out of this reimbursement.

Sponsoring organizations of centers may choose to have their maximum rate of reimbursement determined by either the tiering method or an alternate method. The tiering method has been developed to help sponsoring organizations of centers that serve a high percentage of needy children.

Under the tiering method of reimbursement, sponsoring organizations of centers are placed in one of three tiers, depending on the percentage of children served who are eligible for free or reduced-price

meals. The tier in which a sponsoring organization is placed determines its rates of reimbursement for all meals. If one-third or more of the children enrolled in a sponsoring organization's centers are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, that sponsoring organization would receive its maximum potential reimbursement by choosing the tiering method.

The alternate method is appropriate for sponsoring organizations of centers that do not serve high percentage of free and reduced-price meals. Under this method, sponsoring organizations are reimbursed according to the actual number of children who are eligible for the different categories of reimbursement—paid, reduced-price, and free.

If less than one-third of the children enrolled in a sponsoring organization's centers are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the sponsoring organization would receive its maximum potential reimbursement by choosing the alternate method.

Sponsoring organizations and independent centers can receive guidance on the best reimbursement method for them from their administering agency. All reimbursement rates are adjusted periodically to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Organizations that sponsor day care homes receive separate reimbursement for administrative costs and for food service costs.

The reimbursement for food service costs is passed on by sponsoring organizations to the day care homes under their administration.

Food service costs. Organizations that sponsor day care homes are reimbursed for food service costs based on the number of meals served in the day care homes. USDA has established food service payment rates that prescribe the level at which each breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack will be re-

imbursed. These rates are adjusted periodically to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index.

All meals served by day care homes under the CCFP are reimbursed at the food service payment rate level. Homes receive the full rate for each meal that meets program requirements. The sponsoring organization must pass the full food service payment to the home, unless the sponsoring organization provides part of the home's food service. In this case, the home and sponsoring organization must make a written agreement about how much of the food cost payment the sponsoring organization will receive.

Administrative costs. The reimbursement that sponsoring organizations of day care homes receive for administrative costs is based on the lesser of four factors: (1) actual administrative costs; (2) an amount determined by multiplying the number of homes administered by the sponsoring organization by an administrative rate established by USDA; (3) the sponsoring organization's budget, as approved by the State agency administering the CCFP; and (4) 30 percent of the yearly total administrative and food service reimbursements for the sponsoring organization's day care home operations.

Sponsoring organizations are not permitted to charge homes a fee for the administration of the program.

Recordkeeping requirements vary for sponsoring organizations, independent child care institutions, and day care homes. Independent child care institutions and sponsoring organizations must keep the following records:

- copies of all applications and supporting documents;
- daily attendance records for enrolled children and the numbers of breakfasts, lunches and snacks served to them;
- information on the family size and income of children enrolled in child

care centers and outside-school-hours care centers;

- copies of menus and any other food service records required by the state agency;
- documentation of administrative and operating costs, as well as of any income to the program;
- copies of all claims for reimbursement and receipts for all program payments received from the state agency;
- information on training provided to child care center staffs or day care providers;
- and, except at day care homes, daily records indicating the number of meals, by type, served to adults performing labor necessary to the food service.

In addition, sponsoring organizations must keep records of payments to each child care facility and reviews of food service operations in each facility.

Day care homes must keep daily attendance records of the children in their care. They must also keep daily records of the number of meals and the menus they serve. The sponsoring organization will collect these records from the day care home at least once a month.

All sponsoring organizations are eligible to receive advance payments. These funds are available to help sponsoring organizations pay for program expenses that are incurred prior to receiving program reimbursement for the month. Sponsoring organizations may choose to receive all or part of the advance payment they are eligible for, or they may choose not to receive advance payments. Each State may establish additional requirements for advance payments.

If you would like more information, contact the FNS regional office for your state as listed on page 3.

by Michael McAteer and Michael Healy



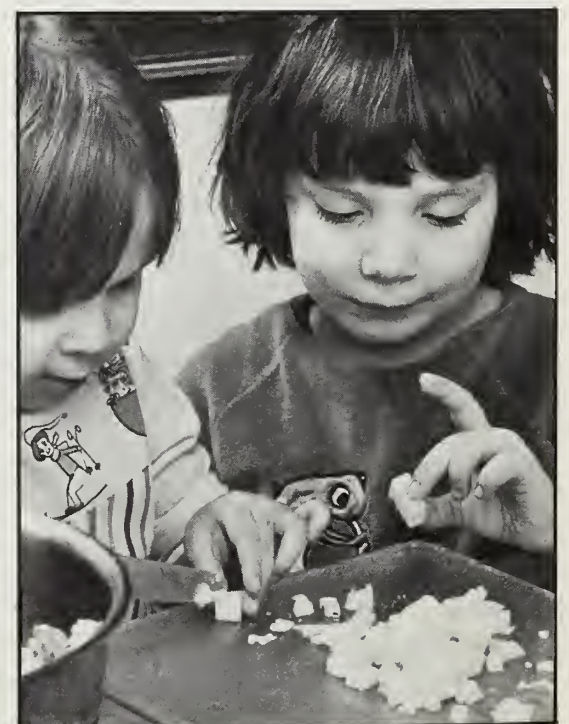
Day care

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At 5:30 every morning a light comes on at 41 Dunbar Street, and the Kent family gets ready to start another day in their family business. Donna and Jeffrey dress, then wake their two daughters, Elizabeth, 3, and Vicki, 15 months. At 6:45, as Jeffrey begins preparing breakfast, Donna leaves in the family car. She returns an hour later with five bright-eyed children.

The Kents operate a day care home in Manchester, New Hampshire. Theirs is one of approximately 1.8 million day care homes providing a service that is increasingly in demand as more and more mothers join the work force. Nearly 8 million mothers with children under age 6 now work outside the home. By 1990, the number is expected to increase to 10.5 million. Many of these working mothers are single parents living below the poverty line, according to a recent Census Bureau study.

Donna and Jeffrey Kent started in the child care business 5 years ago when Donna decided her librarian job was not allowing her enough time to work with children. She quit her job and started caring for children in her home. Six months later,



Food and Nutrition

with a family feeling

Jeffrey quit his job at the library and made the child care operation a family business. He also began working part-time toward a master's degree in early childhood education.

Now care for eight children

The Kents now care for eight children, ranging from 18 months to 6 years old, plus their two daughters, Elizabeth and Vicki. They have converted the first floor of their home to accommodate the business. The living room serves as the reading room, and the dining room doubles as a makeshift office for Donna and Jeff and a place for quiet activities for the children, such as painting and drawing. There is also a playroom for toys.

The kitchen is a learning laboratory as well as the place for cooking and eating meals. Here the children help Donna and Jeff prepare meals and learn about food. "While we prepare the foods, we talk about how the foods help us stay healthy and strong, and how some foods are better for the body than others," said Donna. "We know we're getting the message across

by the choices the children make when playing games that involve grocery shopping. They usually choose foods such as fruits, vegetables, milk and meat instead of items with little nutritional value."

The Kents participate in the Child Care Food Program and are sponsored by the Greater Manchester Child Care Association (GMCCA). GMCCA takes care of all the food program finances and certain recordkeeping tasks for home providers under its sponsorship. The association also acts as a referral service for parents in need of child care services.

The child care business is the Kent's livelihood. It is a profession they both enjoy and to which they are totally dedicated. "It's also an opportunity to run my own small business right in my home with my family all together," said Jeffrey.

The experience is valuable

Jeffrey advises new and potential home providers to plug into child care associations and meet with other providers to keep abreast of new developments, techniques and general child care information.

He and Donna are active in national, state and local child care associations. Donna is president of the Organization of Day Care Providers (ODCP), a local committee of parents, day care home providers and nutrition professionals in the Manchester area. ODCP serves as a sponsoring organization for some of the child care home providers in the Manchester area, and Jeff is responsible for overseeing ODCP's duties as a Child Care Food Program sponsoring organization.

The experience Jeffrey is getting as a child care provider and with ODCP will be instrumental in attaining his goal of one day operating a network of child care homes.

One image the Kents try to obliterate is that of day care providers as "babysitters," where children spend the day in front of the television. In fact, the television is rarely turned on at 41 Dunbar Street. The Kents provide the children with a structured day of learning activities and experiences that allow each child to develop at his or her own rate.

Lessons are not limited to written or prepared drills. A lesson in





The Kents make preparing meals educational and fun for the kids. Here, and on pages 6 and 7, the children help Jeffrey and Donna make meatloaf.

colors might occur at a traffic light while on a field trip or traveling to and from the day care center. City landmarks provide lessons in history, building structures and shapes, and spelling of street names. The family setting allows children to share responsibility—they help prepare meals, set the

table, and clean up after meals and play activities.

Patience and work pay off

Because of her experience with kids, Donna is quick to zero in on problems such as learning and physical disabilities. She's been

instrumental in helping many children over hurdles. Doctors predicted one 4-year-old boy in the Kent's day care home would not be able to enter kindergarten the following year because he would not communicate verbally. Donna worked patiently with the boy, showering him with extra attention. Her patience and work paid off. The boy was able to start school on schedule and is now an A student.

Then there are times when Donna or Jeff detects or suspects that a child has a handicap such as a hearing or vision impairment. "It is sometimes hard to convince parents that their child has a physical problem or handicap. It's been difficult, but we've managed to get the parents of these children to take the child to a professional to be examined," said Donna.

These are just a few of the rewards of being a child care provider, according to Donna. "It has also helped our children learn to share and interact with other children," she said. "This business allows us to all be together during the day. There is never a boring moment. Every day is different, and every child is different. This is one of the most challenging jobs there is."

For more information, write:
Greater Manchester Child Care
Association,
435 S. Main Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03102

by Marilyn Stackhouse

Latch Key... for before & after school



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Every morning at 7 a.m. the children arrive. They pop out of Novas, Volkswagen beetles, and Econoline vans. They give the parent-chauffeur a kiss good-bye and, clutching records, baseball gloves, and the other impedimenta of childhood, they come to Latch Key to start the day.

Latch Key Child Development is an outside-school-hours day care service operated by the YMCA of Metropolitan Hartford at 16 locations in downtown Hartford and neighboring communities. The service offers care and supervised activities—before and after school—to approximately 500 school-age children.

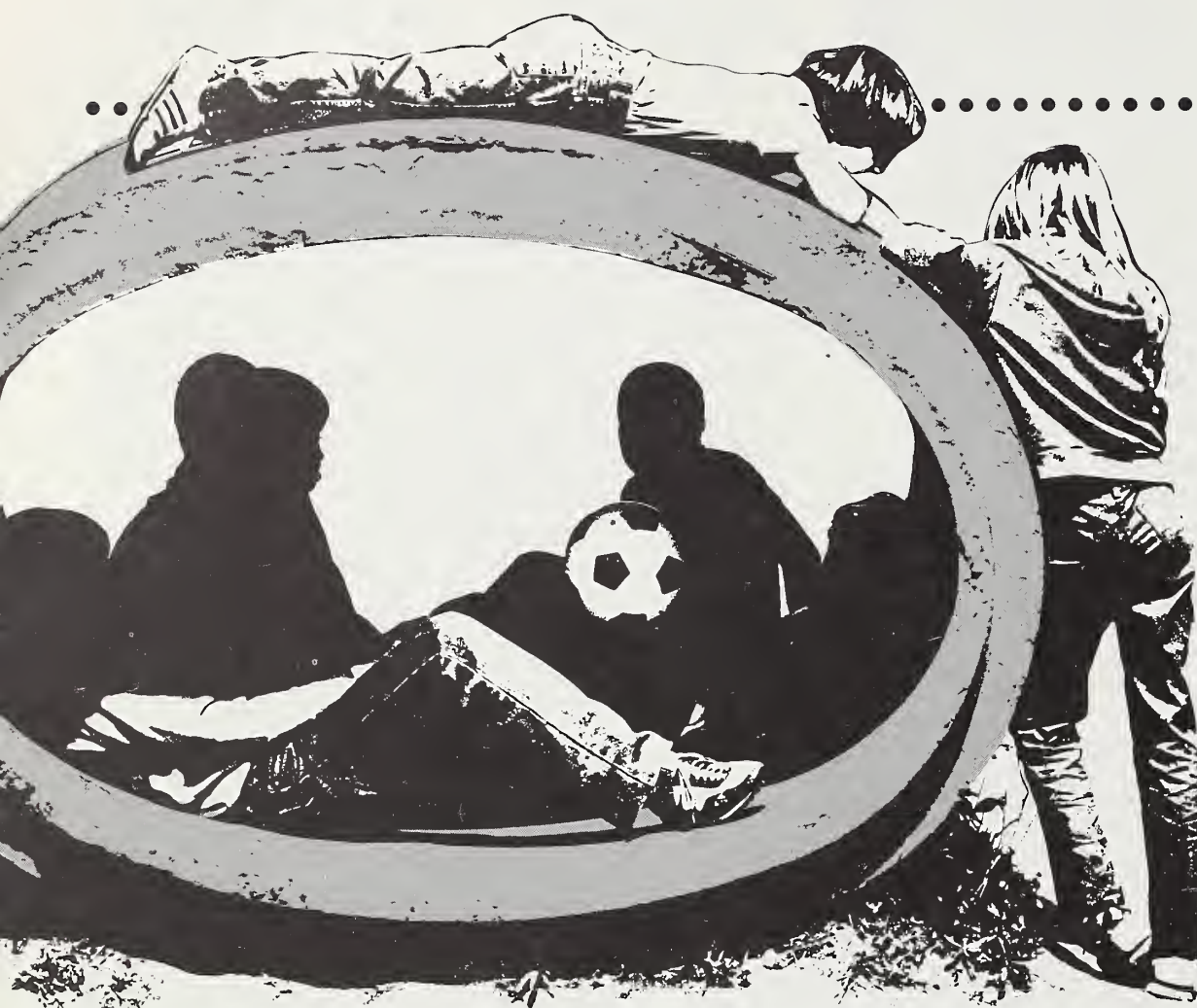
Only one of the 16 Latch Key sites is in a YMCA building. The others are in schools. The unique cooperative venture works well—schools provide the heat and space, and the YMCA provides the staff and administrative structure. Latch Key sites serve breakfast and snacks through the Child Care Food Program.

The need was there

"More and more children live in homes where both parents work or a single parent works," said former Latch Key monitor Joyce Morgan. "Latch Key's goal is to give parents confidence that their children are well cared for while they work. Latch Key also gives children an opportunity for social development and practice in using time constructively.

"The need for the program existed long before we started," said Morgan, who helped set up Latch Key as a pilot project 4 years ago at the Plainville YMCA. Until that time, the "Y" had offered a morning program for preschoolers, but no before-school activities for school-age children.

As head of the YMCA's preschool program, Morgan noticed the lack of organized care for older children.



"When we picked up milk and juice for the preschool children at a local convenience store," she recalled, "the manager would ask what we could do about the school-age children who hung around his store in the morning buying snacks for breakfast and waiting for school to start."

The Plainville YMCA began its before-and-after school operation with 12 children. John Bennet, program director of the Plainville YMCA, and Joyce Morgan worked together in setting up the service, using as a model a Latch Key program in Portland, Oregon.

To notify parents, they mailed announcements to all YMCA member families and got additional help from the director of social services for the Plainville school system, who sent flyers home with the children. Since then, there have always been enough applicants to run a self-sufficient program.

Other areas wanted service

As Latch Key proved successful, parents in other communities wanted a similar service. Although Latch Key is a YMCA concept, individual programs must still be initiated locally, and each program must be licensed individually as a day care program by the Connecticut Department of Health.

Setting up Latch Key in neighboring communities took some thought. "In Plainville, we were in the YMCA building with all its facilities, but in other towns, that wasn't feasible," Morgan said. "One parent decided to petition the board of education in her town, Simsbury, requesting that the schools be used as program sites with the YMCA providing staff."

There are now 5 local YMCA's operating programs in 15 schools. At first, each local YMCA ran its own program, but, as sites multi-

plied, it became more efficient to centralize administration at the Metropolitan YMCA office in downtown Hartford. Harold Wright, assistant executive director of the Metropolitan YMCA, has ultimate responsibility for the program.

Each YMCA works out its own schedule and program according to its needs. For instance, in some towns, school bus schedules are staggered. Consequently, a before-school program in one school may run longer and be larger because more families need before-school care due to a later school opening.

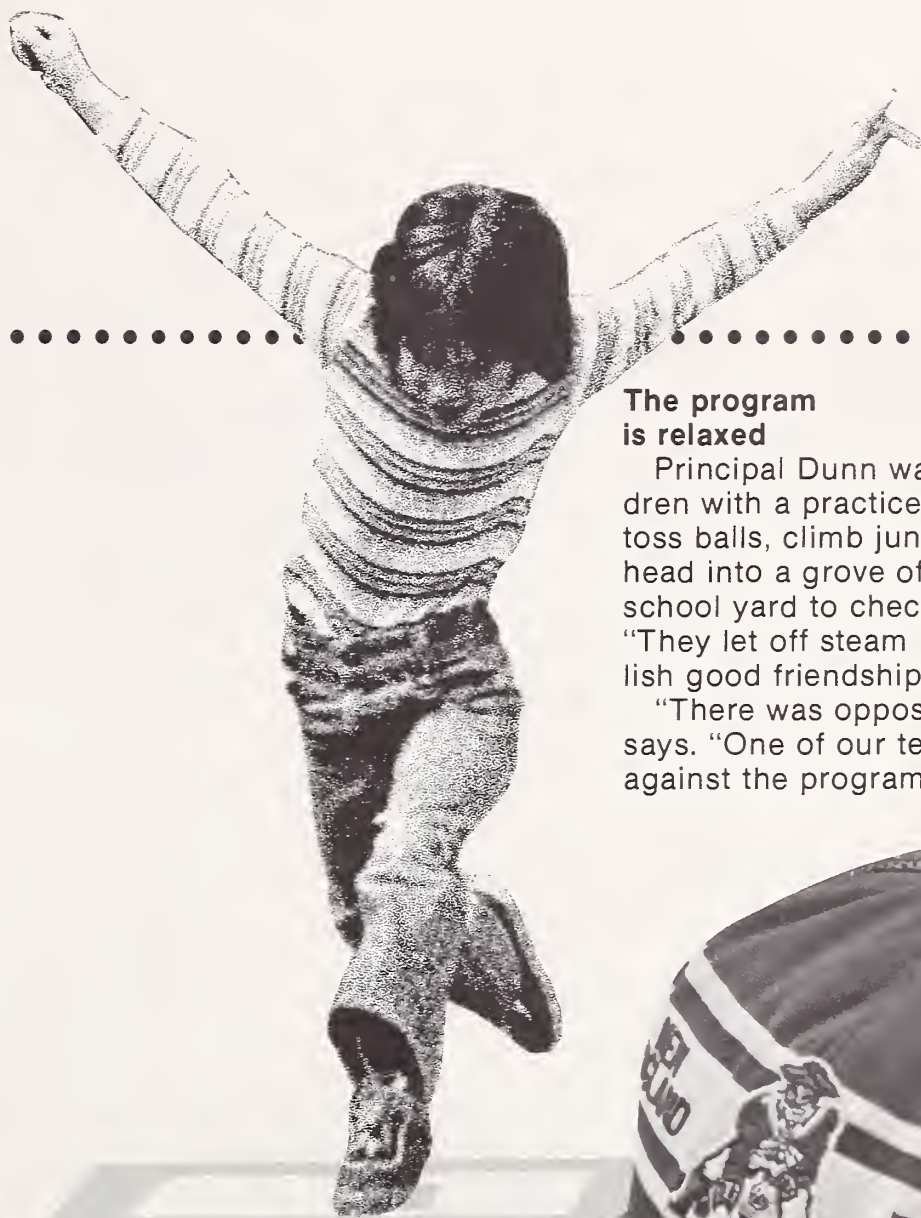
In one town, children can attend town library programs and participate in arts and crafts classes at a nearby art center after school. Other children opt to participate in after-school activities such as soccer, gymnastics, or scouting, using Latch Key as their base.

Coordinators buy the food

Each of the five YMCA's has a coordinator responsible for its sites. The coordinators buy the food and other supplies and arrange for delivery to the schools. Seven of the sites serve breakfast, and morning snacks are available at all others. All of the sites serve afternoon snacks.

In East Hartford at Burnside School, where the Latch Key program has access to a kitchen, the children prepare cheese balls, oatmeal cookies, soup, carrot sticks, and other foods as activities. Two favorite snack items at all locations are orange wedges, and celery with peanut butter.

All of the snacks and breakfasts served at Latch Key sites must meet USDA meal pattern requirements to qualify for reimbursement through the Child Care Food Program. When Latch Key first applied for the program, the staff submitted sample menus to the Connecticut Department of Education's school food services office, which administers



the program. Now, each month they submit a consolidated report on the number of meals served at the sites and keep menus and other program records on file for at least 3 years.

Payments from USDA vary, depending on family income of the children. The rates are adjusted periodically to reflect changes in the cost of living.

All of the Latch Key sites get the USDA reimbursement for food. They also get payments from parents, which average a dollar-an-hour for general care. One reason Latch Key coordinators can keep costs down is that they are using school facilities and they do not have expenses like rent and heat.

Key staff with education, recreational, or social service backgrounds are hired locally. A good many aides come from a State youth employment program. Most staff work split shifts. Some have other jobs, and others go home between the before and after school phases of the program.

Staff works with schools

Walter Dunn, principal of Squadron Line School in Simsbury, the first school to have Latch Key, is positive about the program.

"There's a definite need," he says.

Dunn describes the school-YMCA relationship as casual. "They have a capable staff and they don't get in our way," he says. "They move from one activity room to another, if the need arises. Our cafeteria people let them use part of the refrigerator."

It is up to Latch Key staff to be flexible in using borrowed facilities. On one occasion, the maintenance staff at a school balked at helping a Latch Key program because of confusion as to whether the night or day staff was responsible, but generally, Latch Key needs only minor custodial assistance. If there's a problem, sharing a cup of coffee and chatting with the maintenance people usually resolves it.

The program is relaxed

Principal Dunn watches the children with a practiced eye, as they toss balls, climb jungle gyms, and head into a grove of trees by the school yard to check their fort. "They let off steam here and establish good friendships."

"There was opposition at first," he says. "One of our teachers was against the program. She felt the



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children were already too programmed. At a PTA meeting she asked, 'What's wrong with just hanging around?' Now she approves."

The sites share ideas through a monthly newsletter that includes menu suggestions for snacks and breakfasts. Latch Key coordinators say the exchange is helpful, but they've found that what's right for one town may not necessarily work in another. Often the children establish program activities on their own with guidance from the staff. The Hartford YMCA staff monitor day-to-day accounts and records for the 16 sites and act as consultants for the programming.

Latch Key is growing

Latch Key is growing because of the need for quality care. Comments of Hartford participants reflect the concern felt by increasing numbers of working parents who have school-age children.

"Who's going to stay with the children from 7:10 to 8:15?" asks Cathy Labutis as she drops off

Gretchen, 9, and Joseph, 11, at the YMCA. Labutis is a secretary at an insurance company. Her husband is a machinist. Like many working women, she stayed home with her children during their pre-school years. When she started work, her mother-in-law cared for the children for a while, but for the past 3 years, the children have been going to Latch Key.

Single parent Lois Huot is a lawyer for an insurance company in Hartford. Each afternoon she picks up her three boys at the Hartford YMCA, knowing they've been together and under good supervision. She remembers the tension of

working when Stephen, now 11, was at school in one place, and Joshua and Jason, 8-year-old twins, were cared for in another location with a babysitter with no training.

James Brown, also a single parent and with two children at Latch Key, remembers the anxiety of the day his last sitter quit without notice. "Fortunately, this program was here." His son and daughter, Thomas and Jaimee, are now 10 and 7.

Brown works as a counselor at Long Lane School, an institution for boys with court records, operated by the Connecticut State Department of Children and Youth Services. "Most of the kids at Long Lane were left at home alone a lot and were sent to school without meals. It didn't help."

If you're interested in learning more about the Hartford Latch Key Child Development Program, write:
Hartford YMCA
160 Jewell Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06070
Telephone: 203-522-4183.

By Catherine Tim Jensen



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